THE Reconstructionist

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CORRESPONDENCE

dicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of el's ancient homeland, and to the furthe ance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

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DITORIALS

IE FORTHCOMING WORLD ONIST CONGRESS

THE World Zionist Congress, about to convene in sle, is the first since 1939. The tragic erval between that fateful year and has shaken the world, and decimated ranks of Israel. From the Basle of 7 to the Basle of 1946, the Zionists the world have transformed Eretz rael as by a miracle; and the forthning Congress would be an occasion of mph and rejoicing, were it not for the rible events through which the Jewish ple has just passed and the unspeak- brutality of a world which bars the of peaceful builders to their land. ead of celebrating, the delegates will nt their appalling losses, take poignant of empty places, and turn grimly he greatest task ever set before them. or the new Congress meets with lit- hanged, politically, since the issuance he White Paper in May 1939. Immi- on is still restricted; land sale is still ically limited; the Arabs are still be- appeased—it is almost as though ing had happened between 1939 and . The fact is that, in seven years, world witnessed the slaughter of six on Jews, the defeat of Hitler and olini, the treachery of the Arab leaders, the reentry of America as a participant in world affairs, the magnificent upsurge of Jewish resistance in Eretz Yisrael. Yet, the British foreign office proceeds blandly in the customary fashion; its vocabulary is still of commissions, investigations, committees, delays, round table discussions. The delegates might imagine themselves living through a political nightmare. They are bewildered by the discrepancy of pace and tempo between the passionate impetuosity of desperate homeless Jews, and the somnambulism of the British negotiators.

This maddening, schizophrenic dilemma probably accounts for the deep conflict that now threatens the unity of the Zionist world. It is living and operating on two levels simultaneously, on the level of international law, commitments, Mandates, Balfour Declarations, historic claims to the land, moral and humane considerations — and, at the same time, on the level of cattleboats loaded with Jews, of concentration camps in Germany and Cyprus, of urgent, clamorous crying need. There is the Jewish statesman, torn between his patient devotion to the Zionist goal, and his anguished and outraged Jewish soul.

No wonder each of the delegates to Basle is a man of two minds. In some, the long-range hope dominates; in some, the immediate need has the upper hand. Those who say: "We stand upon the

bond, we will not renounce the rights solemnly pledged to us by fifty nations, even if our insistence involves a delay of immigration," are not really callous, and unfeeling of Israel's pain. And those who say: "Let us take what we can get now, and trust the rest to the future," do not, with easy consciences, cast into the ash heap the prayers and the sacrifices of sixty generations. Alas for the day when our leaders must choose between the two courses; and weighty indeed is the task upon their shoulders!

We who send them on their way with blessings upon our lips can only pray that their bitterness will not becloud their wisdom, that their impatience will not sacrifice our destiny, that their sense of history will not blind them to the demands of the moment. We urge that they elect an Executive who will negotiate with the powers only on condition that the establishment of a Jewish state be basic to all discussions, a state large enough to allow for the normal and healthy growth of the *yishuv*. Above all, we must plead for true unity, for an end to personal feuds, recriminations and retaliations. Ambition and pride must give way to humility in this grave and historic hour.

The eyes of all the Jewish world will be upon the delegates. The eyes of future generations will scrutinize their words and deeds. May they be worthy of their role in the epic of Israel.

THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION AND JEWISH EDUCATON

THE October 4 issue of the *New Palestine* contains an article by Daniel Frisch on Jewish Education in America. After reviewing the inadequacies of existing types of Jewish schools and bureaus of education, he arrives at the conclusion that "it is imperative that the ZOA, in cooperation with other bodies, create a commission consisting of the most outstanding survivalist leaders in American Jewish life to study the condition of Jewish education in America and to plan its betterment."

With the intent of Mr. Frisch's suggestion, no loyal Jew and particularly no Zionist can fail to agree. Jewish education in America is on the whole in a bad way. Even though we recognize here and there some signs of possible improvement in the future, (which Mr. Frisch perhaps underestimates), nevertheless we have reason to be deeply disturbed by the large numbers of Jewish parents who completely or almost completely neglect the Jewish education of their children. It is perhaps even more discouraging to note how ineffective is the education received even by most of those children who attend a Hebrew school for a number of years. We also agree with Mr. Frisch that Zionists, being as a rule more aware than most other Jews, of the need of maintaining the solidarity of the Jewish people and the historic continuity of Jewish life, should be in the forefront of the movement to reeducate Jewry.

But we doubt whether the ZOA is, or will ever be, in a position to give the problem that measure of care and consideration which it warrants. The record of the ZOA in respect to Jewish education is a bad one. Education is a long range cause and demands a continuity of policy. The ZOA is primarily—and needs to be—a political, fiscal and propaganda agency. Its policies must be subject to alteration to meet the expediencies of a continually shifting situation. Hence we find frequent changes in policy and leadership such as make a stable and continuous interest in educational problems impossible. Several efforts have been made in the past to organize a depart-

ent of education in the ZOA, but with-
it permanent result.

Mr. Frisch himself points to the fact
at as recently as two years ago the
OA conducted an educational survey
a cost of close to $10,000. But virtually
othing has been done to implement its
commendations. Now he suggests a new
mmission "to study the condition of
wish education in America and to plan
betterment." If ever the ZOA should
ll such a commission into being, and
the commission should meet and ren-
r a complete report of its recommenda-
ns, what then? After an interval of
other two years, will Mr. Frisch or
me other Zionist then propose a new
mmission to study the survey made by
at commission?

But we are not interested in discourag-
Mr. Frisch and other Zionists from
king to improve the educational level
American Jewry through the Zionist
vement. We believe, however, that
y could probably do more to effect
t purpose if, instead of trying to create
ew educational agency, they were to
the Zionist movement for mobilizing
nist support behind the appropriate
ting agencies, agencies that are ex-
ssly devoting themselves to Jewish ed-
tion as their only job. *If all Jewish*
nts who are enrolled in the ZOA and
r American Zionist organizations
keenly aware of the educational im-
ations of Zionism, and eager to edu-
their own children in a genuine
sh culture, they could revolutionize
sh life in America.

ere is a task to which the ZOA could
te itself. Let it conduct through the
icts a vigorous campaign of educa-
with the following objectives in
:

To see that every member of the
ict has provided for the Jewish edu-
n of his children in a school that offers a rich curriculum, an adequate number of hours of instruction weekly and due emphasis on the Hebrew language, the role of Palestine in Jewish life, the need of solidarity with world Jewry and responsible participation in American Jewish communal life.

2) To encourage in every locality the communal rather than the institutional approach to Jewish education.

As long as congregations or schoolboards act independently without reference to what others are doing, they will educate children to look upon a particular congregation or a particular type of congregation or sponsoring organization as though its preservation were the objective of a Jewish education. When experience deflates for the graduates of such schools the importance of the particular congregation or sponsoring institution, they see no relevance to their lives and consequently no value in their Jewish education. They are, therefore, disinclined to give their children a Jewish education.

Zionists sometimes resent the servicing by bureaus of Jewish education, of schools whose programs lack some of the elements of a Jewish education that are essential from a Zionist viewpoint. But there is no way, in a democratic voluntarist community, to emphasize the peoplehood of Israel and the mutual responsibility of all Jews who want to be Jews, unless we recognize the right of parents to provide the kind of education they want their children to receive in schools of their own choice. Coordinating agencies must therefore help every type of school to achieve its own educational aims, while at the same time, through exchange of ideas and experience, correcting misunderstanding and broadening the educational horizon of each group. But Zionists should see to it that every kind of Jewish school is fairly represented and

that those types of which Zionists can approve are given every facility they need for their development.

3) Zionist districts should encourage Jewish art and Jewish artists by arranging for the presentation of their works and adequately remunerating them for their services.

4) The Zionist Organization has a big field cut out for it in the realm of specific educational propaganda for Zionism. Let us not be frightened by the word propaganda. Merely because political scoundrels use propaganda for evil ends, does not mean that propaganda is evil. Propaganda for Zionism is propagnda for a good end. It has a legitimate place in Jewish education. The ZOA should therefore stimulate the preparation of educational material concerning Palestine, Zionist institutions, Zionist literature and Zionist heroes, for every age level from nursery school to university.

To carry out the program indicated, there is need for an adequate educational budget and the appointment of the right personnel at a decent salary and with assured tenure of office. That is something which Zionists should demand of their organization.

FROM THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY TO UNIVERSITY OF JUDAISM

THE first steps in the conversion of the Jewish Theological Seminary into a university of Judaism were announced at a conference called for that purpose at the Seminary on November 10th. The full significance of that change is not generally understood and it will probably take more than one such meeting as that of November 10th to impress its import on the community. Many look upon the project merely as an expansion program designed to give greater prestige to the Seminary. Others confuse it with the scheme for a Jewish university such as the Einstein Foundation is interested in. In reality it is designed to meet a need that cannot be met by a rabbinical college nor by a non-sectarian university under Jewish auspices similar to the universities under other denominational auspices. Such institutions serve useful purposes but cannot take the place of a university of Judaism.

The transformation of the Jewish Theological Seminary into a university of Judaism represents the first attempt in the realm of higher education to reckon with Judaism not merely as the religion of the Jewish people but as the civilization, the entire way of life of the Jewish people. It recognizes the truth that, no matter how dominated and pervaded by religion Jewish civilization may be, the Jewish people nevertheless has also its secular interests. Among these are the political and economic support of the Zionist enterprise, the combating of anti-Semitism, the establishment and administration of Jewish communal agencies, Jewish philanthropy, the preservation and spread of the Hebrew language, Jewish education, the promotion of Jewish research, literature, and the arts, and other similar interests. For a wholesome Jewish life, it is necessary that any Jew who exercises leadership in any one of these fields should have some acquaintance with the whole range of Jewish civilization and its history as well as with the technique required in his more specialized area of endeavor.

The traditional curriculum of our rabbinical colleges is too narrow to provide this education. It has come down to us from an age when the problem of education for Jewish leadership was much simpler than it is in our day. Throughout the Middle Ages, when all Jews lived in autonomous communities and acknowledged the authority of Jewish law, knowl-

ge of the Talmud and the Codes was e one educational qualification for Jew- communal leadership. With the nancipation and Enlightenment, new alifications have become necessary. daism has to fit itself into the frame non-Jewish civilizations and Jewish re- ion has to meet the challenge of secu- ism. The rabbi has had to become a acher and apologist for Judaism. The l-fashioned *yeshivot* gave way to the ological seminaries in which Jewish tory, philosophy and homiletics were led as important elements of the cur- ulum, and which required of their stu- nts a secular university education in lition to the pursuit of Jewish studies. it was still assumed that the exposi- n of the religious tradition of Judaism the sole function of the rabbi and t the rabbinate was the only indis- ssable type of Jewish leadership.

n the meantime new types of Jewish lership have arisen without benefit of higher Jewish education whatever. a result, we have today Zionist lead- Jewish social workers, philanthropists, lic relations counselors and others in tions of responsibility for the conduct ewish affairs, many of whom are al- illiterate as far as Jewish knowledge ncerned.

e have, moreover, hosts of gifted and ted young people conspicuous in ature and in the arts who, however, r utilize their gifts in the enrichment ewish spiritual life, because they lack vledge of Judaism and interest in it. ng no intention of becoming rabbis, never sought that knowledge of Jew- xperience, which would qualify them terpret its significance through their

is interesting to note that one of the teps taken in implementing the idea e university of Judaism was that nced at the Conference in New York by Herbert Lehman. He proposed giving fellowships of $15,000 each to talented young people who wish to pursue advanced studies in any of the arts. They could pursue such studies in any university of their choice but would be required at the same time to take orientation courses in Jewish subjects, which would qualify them for putting their acquired literary and artistic techniques at the service of Judaism.

The proposed University of Judaism, when completed, will include the following schools: (1) a Rabbinical School, as at present, (2) the Teachers Institute for training instructors and educators, (3) a School for Advanced Jewish Studies to train research scholars in all phases of Jewish life and thought,(4) a School of the Arts to bring to young Jewish artists the background of Jewish knowledge (including courses for the training of cantors), (5) a School for Communal Service for social workers, community center directors, directors of youth group activities, and administrators of public organizations and institutions, (6) a School of Democracy, to conduct branches of the Institute of Religion and Social Studies for guidance of religious leaders of all faiths in combating bigotry and group dissension, (7) a Department of Public Education, to popularize Jewish ideas and ideals (to include such projects as the present "Eternal Light" broadcasts), (8) a Department of Adult Jewish Education, to include the Seminary School of Jewish Studies for club leaders and camp counselors, the Women's Institute of Jewish Studies, and the National Academy of Adult Jewish Studies, all of them already in existence.

To complete this program will, of course, take time. How long will largely depend on the success of the present campaign for funds. But if the Jewish public realizes how important a univer-

sity of Judaism is to the future of Judaism in America, American Jewry will speed the program by giving it generous support.

REALITIES AND VALUES

BRITISH PROPAGANDA IN JUSTIFICATION of the arbitrary and oppressive military occupation of Palestine has combined with the characteristic sensationalism of the press to give the impression that the Jews of Palestine are a violent and lawless lot who must be governed by an iron hand. We wish that all the newspapers who have played up stories of Jewish "terrorism" would give prominence to the statistics concerning the incidence of crime among Jews, Moslems and Christians in Palestine, which we quote from the *American Jewish Outlook* of Pittsburgh, Pa. The item in the *Outlook* gives as the source of its information the Government Department of Statistics in Jerusalem. "The Court of Criminal Assize tried 49 cases of murder involving 99 persons during the whole of last year. Twenty three men were convicted. . . . Of this number, 20 were Moslems and three were Christians. No Jews. The District Courts tried cases involving 2,462 persons. Of 1,374 convicted, 1,146 were Moslems, 159 were Jews, and 69 were Christians. Of 59 convicted of attempted murder, all were Moslems. Of 81 persons convicted and sentenced for manslaughter, 76 were Moslems, four were Christians and one was a Jew. Fifty-five Jews were convicted and sentenced for offenses against property (including 20 for house-breaking—a crime for which 109 Moslems and 11 Christians were also convicted) and 14 for breaking into buildings with intent to commit felony."

THE ACQUITTAL OF LT. GOURLAY by a Court Martial in Palestine is news. We have become so accustomed to expect miscarriages of justice from the British police state in Palestine that the vindication of Lt. Gourlay, who had incensed the administration by his candid and scathing attacks on the British military regime, comes as a welcome surprise. He had called for the removal of the 6th Airborne Division from Palestine, stating that "if they go on behaving as they are allowed to behave at the moment, there will be such an outcry as will get it stopped immediately." He also charged, according to *Trend of Events* (November 15, 1946) that the troops were told "to protect the Arabs against the Jews," and demanded, "Let the entire British administration in Palestine, from the Chief Secretary downward be recalled and an inquiry made into their trusteeship. The results will no doubt be more illuminating than the Nuremberg trials." It is a credit to the military court that it acquitted him. But if he is innocent, after having brought such charges against the administration, can the same be said of those whom he accused?

FROM THE 15TH OF NOVEMBER to the 15th of December has been set aside as Jewish Book Month, to be devoted to persuading American Jewry to read and buy Jewish books. It is unfortunate that such an institution is needed. But the need is there, and we should do our utmost to help Jewish Book Month achieve its purpose. American Jewry has far to go before it reaches the standard of literacy of the Jewry of Eretz Yisrael. We translate the following from an article by M. Shoshani in the *Hadoar* of Heshvan 21: "During the six years of the war, years of trouble and scarcity, 3,122 books were published. Of this number 870 appeared in the single year of 5,705 and that amount was exceeded in the year 5706." As to the range of this liter-

ry productivity, we are told that it in-
luded "poems and novels, original works
nd translations, works of research in
iblical literature and in the development
the *halakah,* of history and philosophy,
olklore and archaeology, psychology and
ducation, philology and grammar, and
l the other subjects and interests that
nstitute the basic pattern of our culture.
. . The boundaries between the genera-
ons have been obliterated and the bor-
erline which existed a generation ago be-
ween Judaism and humanism has been
iped out. Hebrew literature has become
national literature that is universal in
ope, including past and present, the
wish and the generally human. Therein
s its power and its virtue."

▼

THE PROJECT OF THE ALBERT
nstein Foundation to establish a uni-
rsity sponsored by Jews and open to
students without discrimination as to
ce or religion is making headway. Its
cleus will be what is now Middlesex
niversity located in Waltham, Mass. But
en it opens next year under the spon-
ship of the Foundation, it will be
own as Brandeis University. The name
s well chosen indeed. It honors a
at personality who has made a major
ntribution both to Jewish life and to
nerican life. Our hope is that the uni-
sity which bears his name will prove
rthy of it by also making a noble con-
ution both to Judaism and to Ameri-
ism.

▼

AT A SCHOOL ASSEMBLY OF
Lafayette High School in Buffalo, a
urer, George E. Caraker of Missoula,
nt., used the word "gangsters" in de-
bing the Jews in Palestine. As reported
a JTA dispatch of November 13, the
ish students took offense and began
kling the speaker. Although there was
disorder, the assembly was dismissed
and police were called as a precautionary measure. The next day the 1,400 students of the school were assembled by the principal "to straighten out matters." Robert T. Bapst, Superintendent of Schools, termed the incident "regrettable" and ordered all principals to secure more information about speakers in the future. We congratulate the Jewish boys of the school for having had the spunk to stick up for their fellow Jews in Eretz Yisrael and for having helped keep the schools of their city safe against hate propaganda.

▼

THE FOLLOWING ITEM IS quoted without comment, precisely as it appeared in *Politics* of November 1946, under the caption, "Footnote on Cyprus":

"Mr. Turton asked the Colonial Secretary how many Jews are at present resident in Cyprus and what steps he is taking to encourage the immigration of Jews into this colony.

"Mr. George Hall: The number of Jews now residing in Cyprus is 107. The conditions of Cyprus offer no opportunity for large scale immigration of any kind.

"—Proceedings, House of Commons, May 15."

▼

DR. ROBERT E. KEIGHTON OF the Crozer Theological Seminary, is quoted by *Religious News Service* (November 13, 1946) as having said that preachers have lost their authority because too much emphasis has been placed on the sermon. He was speaking, of course, of conditions in the Protestant Church. The situation applies, however, to the synagogue as well. But how make the service important? As long as Jews will take a legalistic attitude to ritual and hesitate to change the wording of a traditional text, religious services will remain perfunctory. Dr. Keighton claims

that there is a movement today to give more attention to the service and that this movement is coming from the people and is not being imposed by the clergy. We are glad to see, in Judaism also, more thought being given to the development of the liturgy. It is not so long since the Union Prayer Book was revised. Later came the publication of the new Sabbath Prayer Book by the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation. And the latest Prayer Book to appear is that published by the Rabbinical Assembly. Naturally the Reconstructionist Prayer Book satisfies us best, but we welcome all of these publications in the hope that they will stimulate the congregations to take worship seriously and to demand services in which they can participate with heart and mind, not merely with their lips.

Europe's Jewry: Resettlement and Rehabilitation

By EDWIN S. NEWMAN

THE Christian world is faced with a dual responsibility with reference to the Jews of Europe. On the one hand, there is the obligation to resettle elsewhere in the world the currently "displaced persons." These are people whose lives were completely uprooted by the Nazi persecutions—men, women and children, driven or kidnapped from their native lands, left bereft of their kin and their possessions, individuals islanded in a sea of material and psychological depression, for whom the future can have significance only if they can escape from Europe. On the other hand, there is the obligation to contribute toward the rehabilitation of those Jewish communities in Europe which, though debilitated and dispirited, have succeeded in emerging from the Hitler holocaust with the contours of community life still vaguely intact.

Hostile Immigration Policies

Thus far, the nations of the world have indulged in pious expressions of sympathy for these unfortunates of Europe, but no constructive program for resettlement and rehabilitation has been forthcoming. With reference to arranging for the migration of large numbers of Europe's Jews, the various national policies hew closely to the pre-war line of exclusion. In the United States, President Truman has, by directive, afforded quota preference to displaced persons. But the anticipated post-war rebirth of anti-immigration and anti-alien sentiment has led to the introduction of legislative proposals to cut immigration quotas and to an increased stringency of administration of our current immigration laws; this, notwithstanding the fact that from 1939-1945, annual immigration quotas have gone almost totally unfilled.

The attitude of Great Britain has been even more unsympathetic, as reflected in the strongly hostile reaction of her government to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry plan for the immediate immigration of 100,000 Jews to Palestine. The various Dominions of the Empire also have indicated that, while they intend to open their lands to immigrants, the Jews are not preferred. Similarly, the South American nations have colored their immigration policies with anti-Semitism. The Brazilian government desires that

armers and farm laborers come to razil, but it has expressly stated that wishes no more merchants. Moreover, while citizens of other American ations can obtain visas for entry into razil from any Brazilian consul, applints for visas who are of Semitic igin must have their requests forwarded Rio de Janeiro. Argentina has indicat- that she would welcome eight million migrants to her country, but the stated eference is for Italians and Spaniards. sewhere, as in the Dominican Republic in the autonomous Birobidjan region the Soviet Union, where Jewish migration has been invited, the preminantly agricultural character of ese areas makes them unsuitable for old- Jews, for whom the physical burden d complete newness of this sort of rk would make readjustment especial- difficult. Finally, the Chinese governnt has repeatedly requested that steps taken to deport some 15,000 European ws who, during the war years, found carious refuge under Japanese dominon in Shanghai.

t is clear that the nations individually unwilling to undertake the resettlent of Europe's stateless Jewry. Each ks to the course of its national policy. parently, only through joint action en under the auspices of the United tions can any headway be made tord the solution of this problem. Nor t certain that the United Nations, in present position, can assume leader- in this matter, since action would be endent on the settling of such proative issues as a United Nations man- for Palestine and domestic legislative tment of recommendations for imration by the respective members of United Nations.

culties of Community Rehabilitation

mewhat more auspicious, yet diffi- of administration, have been the attempts to prepare the way for the rehabilitation of Jewish communities within Europe. The basis of such rehabilitation is financial — the furnishing of sufficient money to provide the essentials for organized community living.

On the financial level, the restitution decrees promulgated by the various post-Hitler regimes throughout Europe, are serving as the basic structure on which Jewish community life is being rebuilt. In general, during the years of Nazi puppet domination, Jewish property passed to bureaus set up specifically to administer it. Such property was either expressly transferred to the bureau by force of law, or was taken over by the bureau as "abandoned" in the event that the Jewish owner had fled the country. In addition, substantial amounts of Jewish property were seized by the Germans and subsequently sold or otherwise transferred to third parties who remained in possession at the end of the war. Each of the European nations has, since the cessation of hostilities, set up administrative machinery for the return of this property to rightful owners. To the extent that restitution has been sought directly from the government, the rightful Jewish owners have had moderate good fortune in securing their property, although, at best, property is being returned to them either heavily damaged as a result of the war or heavily liened as the result of improvement costs or the imposition of taxes and fees.

Where the question of a third party in possession is involved there has been little satisfaction of Jewish claims. The majority of the restitution decrees require that all former Jewish property by whomsoever held be registered with the State. But, even where this order is complied with or the existence of a Jewish claim brings the matter to issue, the authorities are not always willing to award the prop-

erty to the Jewish owner. The alleged basis for this position is that the removal of this property from the present possessors and the restoration to former Jewish owners can, at present, serve only to stimulate anti-Semitism among the non-Jewish population. Accordingly, where the Jewish claim is pitted against anything less than blatant fraud on the part of the present possessor, immediate restitution is not generally favored, notwithstanding the express wording of the restitution decrees.

Masterless Jewish Property, a Possible Source for Community Rehabilitation

Actually, however, the restitution decrees pose a more critical problem. As a result of the efficient extermination of Europe's Jewish population, there is today considerable Jewish property held by the European governments for which no valid claimant is now alive. Such masterless property, by law, escheats or reverts to the state. Accordingly, then, much property which would have otherwise passed to Jewish owners or their heirs will, under present circumstances, vest in the respective European governments. Such property should most certainly be applied toward the rehabilitation of the Jewish community within the various European countries. It should be earmarked for Jewish use and benefit on a group basis.

The difficulty with this suggestion is that there is currently no outside coercive force which could require the European nations thus to apply this property. Under the Paris reparations agreement, adopted in December, 1945, a five-nation council was created to deal specifically with the problem of "Jewish reparations," i.e., funds that could be made available for the rehabilitation of Europe's Jewry. The theory on which the council operates is that the Jews, while not a nation, are an identifiable group, a collective entity, with a just claim to compensation for theft, damage, and confiscation.

Thus far, the council has sought to obtain from Switzerland a commitment for the application of Jewish masterless property in that country toward the rehabilitation of the Jewish community in Europe. Similarly, in the United States, a move is now under way to secure the enactment of legislation that would make available Jewish masterless property in this country for the rehabilitation and resettlement of Europe's Jewry. A necessary preliminary to this, however, will be the passage of legislation, currently pending in Congress, to exclude from the categories of persons not entitled to restitution of their property vested by the Alien Property Custodian, the victims of racial and religious persecution. Under the present law, no distinction is made between enemy nationals who were Nazi supporters and enemy nationals who were the initial victims of the enemy regimes. The enactment of the proposed legislation would entitle Jewish owners to a restitution of their property sent to this country for safekeeping. To the extent that neither the owner nor his heirs may now be alive to claim this property, it could, as masterless property that would escheat to the state, be made available for group rehabilitation purposes.

Enemy Assets as a Possible Source

Finally, in this connection, a third source exists from which substantial funds could be secured for rehabilitation purposes. Substantial German assets found their way to this country and to Switzerland. In both countries, such assets were frozen and have been vested in possession by the Swiss and American governments. The application of a proportion of these assets to Jewish rehabilitation would aid considerably in building up a sizeable re-

ervoir of money and property with vhich to resurrect Jewish life in Europe. But, as with the problem of resettlement, t is doubtful whether any individual na- ion will take the lead in making avail- able the necessary funds. Ultimately, it will be external pressure, whether through the five-nation council or through the United Nations Refugee Agency, that will force the desired results.

"Cause Israel to Rest"—A Reply to Mr. Duker

By JACOB B. AGUS

This is the second article evoked by the essay of Abraham Duker in the November 1 issue of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST. In our issue of November 15, we published comment by Ira Eisenstein on Mr. Duker's article. In all of the articles published in this series, the authors are solely responsible for the opinions expressed. Our interest is in giving the public an opportunity to clarify its view by weighing the conflicting opinions of the authors.

—Editors

THE nightmare depicted by Mr. Duker in his memo- ndum to Jewish leaders is unhappily distinct possibility, but his presentation ffers from a host of distortions and half- uths. He therefore arrives at conclu- ons diametrically opposed to those dic- ted by the logic of the situation:

(1) The notion that a policy of de- lopment and anti-exploitation in the ear East would favor the Zionist cause unrealistic. This belief stems psycholo- cally from the fact that most Zionists e also liberals and progressives; thus, ey tend to associate the two ideals in eir mind. In actual fact, however, itain is not opposed to projects for the velopment of the Middle East, as is oven by the Morrison-Grady report ich recommended an American loan of million dollars for the Arabs. On the er hand, the progressive raising of the ab standard of living would increase her than decrease their opposition to nism. This result would be due to the reased susceptibility of educated Arabs nationalist propaganda. Who does not ow that the city Arabs are most strong- opposed to further Jewish immigra- n and that the *fellahin* tend to be sive and tolerant, save when their re- ligious fanaticism is aroused? The Yishuv knows that the educated Arab is most to be feared. Therefore, there is no reason to expect any aid from the anti-feudal forces either in the Middle East or in the West.

(2) Mr. Duker puts the cart before the horse, in writing of "a British-led world-wide war against the Jewish people wherever they reside," as a conspiracy which was deliberately conceived to be a crusade against world Jewry, instead of as a possible result of the clash between British policy and Zionist extremism. Now, distasteful as it may be to indulge in self-criticism, we hurt no one but our- selves if we refuse to think honestly. Ob- viously, it is not true, as Mr. Duker's rea- soning necessarily implies, that the Labor government is Nazi in any sense whatso- ever. They are not even anti-Semitic. As a matter of fact, the Labor Party is friendlier to Jewish people than either the Republican or the Democratic party. No Bilbo, Rankin, or Hoffman could be a member of the Labor Party. To say that either Bevin or Attlee or Morrison are anti-Semites, let alone Nazis, is to befog the issue of British-Zionist rela- tions. They do not believe in a Zionist solution of the Jewish problem; like all

liberals and socialists, they look for the solution of the Jewish problem everywhere to the spread of democracy and progressive ideas generally. To accuse the British government of complicity in the murder of the six million Jews of Europe, as Mr. Duker does, is grossly unfair, to say the least, since, by the same logic, America is equally to blame for not opening her gates and mobilizing her ships for rescue, and, by the extension of the same logic, all who did not give their last penny to the Zionist cause in the twenties and thirties are guilty of murder. Why insist on turning avowed friends into enemies? Britain does not want a war against the Jews. Mr. Bevin, who warned against the rise of anti-Semitism in the British army, was grossly insulted for his pains. Yet he was right, as is now becoming evident.

(3) But, if Britain does not want any anti-Jewish war, why is such a conflict shaping up? It is incumbent upon Jewish leadership to face this question with utter frankness even if it hurts to do without the comforting clichés of superheated self-righteousness, and not to take refuge in shifting the blame on a mythical brand of British Nazism. Britain cannot afford to yield to Zionist pressure and, on her record, she will oppose force and hateful propaganda with greater force and far more vicious propaganda. Why ignore the fact that the *Irgun* and the Stern Group have already declared war against Britain and that far more responsible Jewish leaders are even now threatening warfare to the end against Britain in the event Zionist demands are refused? Granted that a war against Britain would be catastrophic to Jewish people the world over, it must be remembered that extremists in our own ranks are recklessly and blindly driving toward this disaster. Does this mean that the terrorists and their sympathizers and all who propose to resist British authority want war with Britain? Obviously not, but in their eagerness for their cause they refuse to think of the consequences. None are so blind as those who will not see.

(4) The outbreak of war between Britain and the Jews of the world can be prevented by a retreat from their present positions, either on the part of Zionist leadership or on the part of Great Britain. Mr. Duker advises a campaign to induce Britain to reverse her entire policy in the Middle East, by an appeal to those elements "which are immune or can be immunized to the semi-official anti-Semitism of the present British government." It is easy to ask Britain to retreat when one writes for Jewish people. But the Labor Party consists of the very men who in the past could always be relied upon to combat anti-Semitism. If we now dub them as anti-Semitic, what can we expect from the rest of the population? The fact is that the British people feel their Palestine policy is fair and just. It is not necessary to detail the reasons for their view of the situation. Of one thing we can be certain, that the British people will not be moved to recognize the justice of our cause through any form of coercion. The more Britain is attacked either verbally or physically, in Palestine, or elsewhere, the more the British people will turn against Zionism and eventually against the Jewish people. You cannot force people to love you. Thus, Mr. Duker's remedy would only aggravate the situation and hasten the doom that he foresees.

(5) However, the disaster can definitely be averted. If we cannot control the mind of the British people or the policy of the British government, we should be able to influence the mind of our own people and the policies of world Zionism. We must not allow the modern counterparts of the *sikarikin* (the Jewish terror-

sts who helped to precipitate the war
vith Rome) to repeat the performance
f the year 70 C.E., when the Jews in
he Diaspora shared in the tragic conse-
uences of the ill fated revolt in Palestine.
ewish terror in Palestine must be curbed;
xtremist propaganda in this country
ust be stopped; the process of lashing
urselves into fury must cease; for, in
ie arena of nations, we belong among
ie lambs, not the lions. Volumes could
e written exposing in detail the gross
isstatements and unfair exaggerations
hich abound in our own recent propa-
nda. It has become a supreme virtue
seal one's mind to objective or clear
inking and to vie in outjingoing all
ngoists. In normal times, this would be
harmless and even useful failing; in our
y, it is an invitation to suicide.

There is no justification for the policy
"all or nothing" at this juncture in our
tory. Britain does not intend to "liqui-
te the *yishuv*," as the prophets of
steria and the pipers of doom maintain.
en now, 1,500 a month are being ad-
tted legally. Through ways of peace,
spects for further growth and achieve-
nt still exist. If no more can be at-
ned at this moment, we must be able
restrain our own ardor and learn to
it. Otherwise, the dearest hope of our
ple through the ages will be drowned
blood. Mr. Duker conjures up the
ge of a million Jews doomed to die
he gates of Palestine are not opened;
no one has yet suggested that any
h number could be transported to and
nsplanted in Palestine *immediately*.
ert Nathan's plan calls for the pos-
e absorption of this number in a
od of ten years at best.

7) The democratic organs of Pales-
Jewry have now decided to place the
orists beyond the pale. One can only
e that this action will not prove to
o late and too half-hearted. For even
now illegal immigration is officially directed and financed, so that a state of tension is continually maintained, which plays directly into the hands of the Irgunists. Dispatches from Palestine declare that "the resistance movement" served "to maintain the morale" of the Yishuv. What a price to pay for morale! Don't we, as Jews, possess other methods to build up morale? What of our spiritual heritage which served us these two millenia?

(8) Let us be honest with ourselves. What have we—rabbis, educators, journalists and Zionist spokesmen—done to stop the drift toward war with Britain? Did not many of us find it "brave" to echo the jingoistic slogans of the rising wave of nationalist frenzy? Of those who foresaw the trend of events which Mr. Duker describes some refrained to express their thoughts on the ground that "the *yishuv* knows best," as if we had the right to advise all the nations of the world but not our own people; others declared that the Irgunists would not listen in any event, as if we could hope to reverse the policy of the British, but not to affect in the slightest the policy of those, who are part of our very being. The great majority held aloof, I am convinced, for fear of offending those who think with their blood, not with their brains. Thus, cowardice joined with an emptiness of spirit and a plenitude of jingoism to create a conspiracy of silence.

I am not at all proud of the record of our lay or religious leadership in the rising storm in Palestine. But, the tragedy of war with Britain can still be averted—if we are big enough to criticize ourselves, curb our own hot heads, build slowly and wait patiently.

The call of the hour is that which came to the prophet Jeremiah superseding the earlier prophecy of Moses—the call "to go and cause Israel to rest."

Vitalize Jewish Education

By NATHAN A. BARACK

HEBREW has always occupied a conspicuous place in the religious life of the Jew. Traditionally "the holy tongue," the language of our most sacred writings, it is the repository of Israel's deepest spiritual yearnings. For the religious fervor of our psalmists and mystic poets is transmitted to a maximum degree in their own words. The most radical Reformers did not, therefore, dispense entirely with Hebrew as a medium of prayer.

Hebrew is, also, culturally the horizontal and vertical bond of our nation; it unites us throughout the Diaspora as it has linked our people down through the ages. That the philosophic works of Saadia, Bachya, Halevi and Maimonides did not share the obscure fate of the great Ibn Gabirol's *"Fons Vitae"* * is laregly due to the fact that they were translated from the Arabic into Hebrew. In World War II the one language that was understood by religious leaders in the far flung linguistically differing communities wherever Jewish Chaplains were stationed was Hebrew.

Hebrew Language Knowledge a Means Not an End

The wave of fascist anti-Semitism has had the historic effect of all anti-Jewish movements. It has intensified the nationalism of some Jews, and it has driven others to seek a deepening of their religious life. The increased interest in religion and nationalism has led even individuals who had formerly looked askance at the study of Hebrew to view it more favorably. The ranks of those who believe that a richer Jewish life can be fostered through the dissemination of Hebrew were thus augmented.

Because the ultimate goal of most Hebrew advocates is the development of a fuller Jewish life, it is of vital significance that our educational system be so organized as to aid in the realization of the final aim. Since it is in the elementary Hebrew School that the majority of those Jewish children who attended any school receive their religious education; and since often it is there that a pupil's interest in further Jewish education is established, that is the school which should concern us most. (The Talmud considers the elementary teacher who keeps the Torah from being forgotten more important than the profound scholar who by sheer intellect can revive the forgotten Torah.) A knowledge of Hebrew is the key to the American Jewish primary schools. This, of course, (aside from the normal desire for traditional continuity), is in harmony with the theory that a language is closely interrelated with the civilization of which it is part. It is a truism that a classic in the original is more meaningful than in translation. Nevertheless, language is a medium. In its most literary form it is not a substitute for the idea it purports to convey. Hebrew, too, as a language, despite its demonstrated significance, is not identifiable with our religious and cultural values. Hence, whether it should justifiably be the key to an American Jewish elementary educational system depends on whether it actually is the best vehicle for promoting the Jewish way of life—in a social set-up differing fundamentally

* Selections from the book were translated about two centuries after the author's death.

. its conditions of existence from those
. the ghetto.

ne Emphasis on Hebrew a
etriment to Mass Education

Social forces very often generate basic
eeds of which our leaders are fully
ware, but for the satisfaction of which
ey are unable to discover the means.
nus continuous unemployment during
pression years awakened us to the
sirability of some form of social secur-
. The road to its full achievement,
wever, has eluded influential national
aders. All decent human beings seek
ace. How to achieve it is unknown to
r statesmen. Likewise, leaders of Amer-
n Jewry seek the creation of a fuller
wish life. But they have not suc-
eded in discovering the way to their
stination. Their attempt to reach the
ired goal through an emphasis on He-
w has, unfortunately, not been suc-
sful.

Hebrew educators have long been dis-
isfied with the small, and mostly brief,
endance in the Hebrew school. The
merous methods employed to interest
pupil are not lastingly effective. The
mal child finds it burdensome, after
lay at the public school, to struggle
a long period with a language that
not a part of his daily life. That
al atmosphere which is essential to
uring influence is lacking even where
ditions in the school are most favor-
. Because of the absence of a preval-
Jewish atmosphere outside the school,
n the students who do receive a fairly
anced Hebrew education are seldom
to incorporate it into the pattern
heir life.

Meanwhile, very few children reach
thood with a real knowledge of Ju-
m and its culture. Hence, we have
inner poverty in American Jewish
Rabbis endeavor to fill up the cul-

tural void with a variety of classes. The value of these classes no one should dispute; yet, like the Sunday school, they are woefully inadequate to obviate the abysmal and pernicious lack of knowledge in our midst.

Judaism is a way of life. A way of life (if it is truly what its name signifies) must be uderstood in its elements by the mass and in its deeper aspects by a great portion of its adherents. A way of life (or even pure faith) which has no intelligent popular base deteriorates into a tyranny or superstition. A religion forcibly thrust upon a people from above is not a faith but a tyranny. And if people follow a creed voluntarily but blindly, they are not religious but superstitious. (The importance of an intelligent mass following was recently recognized by the publishers of the New Republic when they gave their new editor the authority to transform the magazine from one for a limited intelligentsia to one for the masses, for democracy as a dynamic faith cannot be effective unless those who wish to live by it know and understand its principles and ideals as they apply to daily problems.)

Judaism in America, because of the cultural poverty of our masses, is generally the way of life of our leadership only. Even the leaders do not escape unscathed in the pervasive stagnant atmosphere. The weak and the materialistic become cynical, and their cynicism pollutes the air and infects also the sincere. Rabbis who remain comparatively unharmed in the soul-corroding environment face almost an impossible task in their attempt to rectify conditions. Because the followers are totally unprepared for the great Judaic teachings, the leaders are frequently compelled to dwell on the negative aspects of Jewish life. To the bulk of American Jews Judaism has become synonymous with anti-defamationism

(and social service). Judaism as a positive progressive religious civilization exists chiefly where the traces of the Jewish life of the immigrant have not yet been erased. But even this religious life does not extend far beyond the periphery of the circle of our professional leaders and functions almost within a cultural vacuum. The urgency of an educational program capable of developing a positive Jewish atmosphere is evident.

The Needed Curriculum

We believe that the vital cultural atmosphere can be created by revising our existing educational system. The new system, although fully recognizing the value of Hebrew, would nevertheless universalize our religious and cultural sources in English versions. In the daily Jewish school a child would commence at an early age a carefully mapped out course of study which would generally be completed several years later. The curriculum would consist of English courses in Religion, Literature, History, etc. With the language obstacle removed and with subjects taught by simplified and interesting methods pupils would find their studies neither strange nor difficult. Today the child who is intellectually alert but lacks an aptitude for language study is at a disadvantage. Under the proposed system critical intelligence would not be less important than linguistic aptitude. Of course, the new system would necessitate a well worked out series of text editions of the Bible, Religion, etc. However, with the number of students increased several-fold there should be no dearth of good text-book writers. Moreover, such a system could be universally applied, regardless of the size and locality of a school.

We began our paper with pointing out the importance of Hebrew as a medium of worship. Every child should, therefore, possess a reading knowledge of Hebrew. This knowledge under our suggested system would be attainable by all pupils including the mediocre now no longer overtaxed with "Translation." Reading, only one subject in a curriculum of understandable and stimulating courses in English, would also be less tedious and consequently more easily learned than today.

To assure the transmission of our culture a group of pupils selected on the basis of linguistic inclination, home atmosphere and interest would be given an advanced Hebrew education. Unhampered by the slower and uninterested pupils, this group would progress rapidly beyond the customary smattering of *humash*. The broad and lasting cultural atmosphere created by the introduction of advanced studies in English to a fairly large number of pupils would have a salutary effect on the Hebrew group, too. Medium and not content of study would separate its members from their neighbors. The small Hebrew world would therefore meet with a genuine social approval based upon mutual understanding. The enhanced prestige of Jewish cultural values would induce our students to make their Hebrew literature a living aspect of their cultural life. That this is not pure hypothesis is evidenced by the fact that the Yiddish works of Asch and Singer attained greater 'respectability' after "Three Cities" and "The Brothers Ashkenazi" were translated and accepted by the English reading public. As a result, Yiddish-English readers became more attentive to the literary creations of the above mentioned authors.*

In conclusion, we believe that the in-

*This article was originally written in 1939. A recent example of a religious book in English widely accepted by Jews is Rabbi J. L. Liebman's "Peace of Mind."

ituting of a triple-phased educational rogram, comprising (1) Hebrew read-g for all pupils, progressively taught, :) Jewish culture in English, and (3) ebrew courses for a select group, would nd to remove the deplorable *"am-ha-atzut"* of the mass of our co-religionists. ne average layman would consequently spond more readily to the teaching of a sitive Judaism. Furthermore, Hebrew lture is more likely to flourish in the newly created pervasive Jewish atmosphere.*

* The educational program that we have discussed deals only with methods. The ideals inculcated in a religious school must, however, harmonize with those followed in the home. Otherwise, the child develops hypocrisy or mental conflict. To render religious ideals of the school truly effective, religious fellowships must be organized and the goals of school and fellowship must be coordinated. In turn, the greater knowledge disseminated by the re-vitalized schools would create a more responsive atmosphere for the fellowship.

Random Thoughts

IF we are taught what to think but not how to nk, we end up by not thinking at all.

* * *

To guide our lives by ancient traditions ead of by recently acquired knowl-e is like trying to read by a candle t a thousand yards away, when we e an incandescent lamp overhead.

* * *

n olden times men made progress the they do when they row a boat with .. They moved forward with their s to the receding past.

owadays, they have to make prog- the way they do when they drive a or boat, with their faces to the on-ing future.

ifference in speed calls for a differ- in the direction we face.

* * *

ne well known writer, Hermann edorn, has written a prose poem d, "The Bomb That Fell on Amer-

is an interpretation of the Hiroshima

its interpretation would become the nsus of the American people, it would eclipse in importance the event itself.

That this is no exaggeration, you can convince yourself by ordering the book from the Pacific Coast Publishing Co., Santa Barbara, California.

* * *

All civilizations abound in distorted ideas about God and man. Hence education in religion or in the human sciences, which is not re-education, is mis-education.

* * *

An excellent clue to the understanding of the Bible is to realize that it is the product of the endeavor by Israel's sages, priests and prophets to re-educate their people. They sought to eradicate misconceptions about life, God, man, and the world and to put in their place true conceptions.

The Bible is the first, and so far, the only evidence that a people can re-educate iteslf. Maybe that fact should constitute its main claim to being divine.

* * *

Many birds build their nests in nooks of the houses which face the park. Evidently even birds prefer the stability of

the artificial environment to the insecurity of the natural environment.

* * *

To glory in the disappearance of slavery is like boasting, in the days of the automobile, that we are rid of horse-thieves.

* * *

History is like the Bible, you can quote from either to prove what you want.

Sir Henry Maine and Henry George accepted the theory of agrarian communism. But each one drew his own inference from it concerning the moral value of private property.

Maine inferred that common ownership was suited only to the needs of rude and undeveloped peoples.

George inferred that common ownership was fundamentally rational and conducive to permanent social welfare.

* * *

The difference between optimism and pessimism may be only a difference in emphasis. Take the sentence, "This is the best of possible worlds." If you are an optimist, you emphasize "best"; if you are a pessimist you emphasize "possible."

* * *

The English national anthem, "God Save the King," was recently modified to include a plea for peace.

In place of the second stanza which reads: "O God arise, scatter thine enemies," the following was substituted: "Lord make the nations see that men should brothers be, and form one family the wide world o'er."

The remarkable fact is that both the old and the new stanza have their analogue in our tradition, if not actually taken from it.

The old stanza is a scriptural passage in the book of Numbers, 10:35, which we recite when we open the Ark before taking out the scroll of the Torah.

The new stanza echoes the prayer in the *Amidah* for the High Holidays.

Such a change in the English ritual indicates that the current of life is too strong to resist even for so conservative-minded a people as are the English, where political and religious forms are concerned.

* * *

Why should we keep on reciting the verse about God's scattering His enemies, every time we open the Ark? The Reform ritual has removed it from the prayer book.

In the first place, for us Jews there is a special value in recalling that, in the first stages of our religion, the Ark which contained the "Tables of the Covenant" was a kind of palladium. It was carried into battle and served as an emblem of the actual presence of Israel's God.

That verse thus establishes our spiritual continuity with that early past when our religion was still primitive, and makes us aware of the great spiritual advance which our religion has achieved since then.

Secondly, in course of time, the words "God arise, let Thine enemies scatter," took on a meaning which is forever pertinent. They are a prayer that all who resist God's purpose with man shall be frustrated.

In the English national anthem, however, they retained their primitive meaning, as one can see from the rest of the stanza.

* * *

Far more troublesome than the problem of "Judaism in Transition" are the Jews in Transit. Some one could write a revealing book about them.

They are the wandering Jews who migrate from the Adirondacks to Miami and from Miami to the Adirondacks, stopping on the way in New York or Philadelphia for about two months before Christmas to do their shopping.

They are far freer than the birds of ssage. The latter, undoubtedly share worries and responsibilities of their pective flocks. Not so the footloose and tless Jews. These drown all their com- nal cares in card games which go on ever, under skies both inclement and r.

* * *

No human eye can tell exactly where color of the spectrum ends and the t begins.

No human mind can draw the line be- en one religious denomination and an- er.

Among us Jews there are interdenomi- ional groups that upset all calculations confuse all issues.

They are: the non-observant Orthodox, non-conforming Conservatives, the -progressive Reformists and the secu- sts who love to hear a good *hazan*.

* * *

Character is a text which neither joys sorrows can correct. They only un- line it, making the egoist more ego- and the altruist more altruistic.

* * *

Many people who find the traditional ception of God as a "worker of miracles" untenable, become atheists. They cannot understand that it is possible to have a conception of God in which He is regarded as working with and through nature. They contend that you have no right to change the meaning of the word, "God."

One wonders what these people would say about the word "atom." An atom used to be defined as "the smallest portion into which matter can be divided even by chemical separation." The word itself is derived from Greek in which the "a" is private, and *temnein* means to cut. An atom is an uncuttable portion of matter.

But now with the beginning of the "atomic" age, we have learned to cut or split the atom.

Shall we give up the word "atom"?

Of course we won't. We shall, paradoxically enough, go on speaking about the inauguration of the "atomic" age, when an atom is no longer an atom, because it can be split.

Why not extend the same privilege to the word God, which is henceforth to mean the Power that makes for the realization of human destiny?

Book Notes

E GREAT PRISONERS, ed. by Idore Abramowitz, E. P. Dutton, Y., 1946.

A WELL known professor of homiletics has said no rabbi can consider himself truly ared for his profession unless he has he time been an atheist. In reading re Abramowitz's wonderful collection he literature written in prison, en- *The Great Prisoners*, one is tempted to arrive at a similar generalization regarding the great social and political figures of history. If you have not been in jail at one time or another you cannot possibly amount to anything.

So it would seem from this extraordinary galaxy of prisoners whose writings are collected in this first anthology of its kind. Seriously, however, one is hard put to it to decide whether these extraordinary people got into jail because they were extraordinary, or whether their con-

finement in jail gave them a detachment and perspective which they would not otherwise have had. Whatever the explanation, these men and women seem to have been endowed with an amazing gentleness and tolerance. That even a number of these imprisoned heroes lived to see their own vindication, that a number of them were finally vindicated after their deaths is a heartening fact. Among the moderns, Leon Blum is now back where he belongs, in a leading position in France. Nehru and Gandhi are living to see a new and united India. Alfred Dreyfus lived to be reinstated in the hearts of Frenchmen. The whole group of Irish patriots were finally rewarded with the triumph of their cause.

And Sacco and Vanzetti will be remembered far longer than Mussolini whom they detested.

There is a vast range in Abramowitz's book which makes it a perpetual source of inspiration. Naturally, one must quarrel with an anthologist, and I hereby qualify by registering my complaint at the omission of Jeremiah who also was imprisoned and who also wrote nobly and well in the pit.

I had hoped to review *The Great Prisoners* some months ago thinking that I would write about it when I had finished reading it. I find now that one never quite finishes this book, so why delay longer? It is a constant source of courage for those who love to find themselves in the company of the brave men and women of integrity who dared to speak and act in accordance with their conscience.

IRA EISENSTEIN

CORRESPONDENCE

Two Critiques of Kohn's "The Quest for Religious Truth" and His Reply

Sirs:

I am a little tired (in quite friendly fashion) of having such clichés as "romantic mysticism" flung at me, as Rabbi Eugene Kohn does once more in his article, "The Quest for Religious Truth" in your number of October 1. I am afraid, first of all, that the practice implies a growing intellectual and scholarly irresponsibility. Has Rabbi Kohn, for instance. read anl pondered my fundamental philosophical views in "The Permanent Horizon" (Harper—1934) and especially the final chapter "Toward Religion" in which the epistemological basis of my religious view is established? Has he read the many other passages up and down my probably too many books that bear on this subject?

Perhaps I am far more tough-minded than Rabbi Kohn imagines. It is he who is confused by a quite romantic cult of science. For instance, he writes: "To assume, as some profess, that Jews possess an inherent racial genius for religion is without scientific warrant since religion is not a hereditable (sic!) characteristic." Of course, no accurate writer would have used the term "racial." But aside from that boner let us rewrite the sentence as follows: "To assume, as some profess, that the ancient Greeks possessed an inherent national genius for the arts in space is without scientific warrant, since a genius for the arts in space is not a heritable characteristic." Well, since the Greeks' possession of such genius even in the period of their decay is an indisputable fact, so much the worse for the kind of science and for the grovellers before that kind of science who would deny the fact. It is a fact—a fundamental fact—of all human, of all historic experience that certain national groups have had specific gifts in which other peoples, who had other gifts, were poorer. On Rabbi Kohn's own quite secular ground there is no reason for denying to the Jewish people that special genius for religion and also for conduct, for righteousness, to which their own millenial destiny and all the history of the Western world bear irrefutable witness. The uniqueness, the *Einmaligkeit* (Buber) of Israel's character and fate has been for several thousand years and is at this burning moment the most salient experience—positively or negatively, for good or ill—of mankind. To deny so tremendous a *fact* in the service of a classificatory conception of science which has simply nothing to do with it—can one imagine a romanticism more weary, withered or convention-ridden?

The crux of the whole matter lies here. I think it can be proved up to the hilt that the essential truth of the Jewish religion has been

manifested *within the historic process,* subjectively in the preservative and sanctificatory value of the *mitzvot,* objectively in the indisputable fact that the attitude of the nations toward Israel and Israel's religion has been their judgment and, in the German case, their doom. I am unwiling to go beyond the historic process. It would take me too far and it is unfashionable. But that process is not accidental. Nor is it accidental that no ethic without metaphysical validation has or has ever had any compelling force. The precise character and process of "revelation" are dark to me. I need not remind Rabbi Kohn that the words of the Torah are in the speech of the children-born." But what the "tempo of technological and social change" has to do with these supreme matters is darker to me still. To a tough-minded realist like me, unbefuddled by the superstitions of science, the "social change" of recent decades—the dictatorships of right and left, the very death of humanity in the hearts of men—seems to cry out with a voice of incomparable power for a return to those values, the loss and neglect of which has brought mankind to unheard of defeat and disaster. The horrors of our age have been *simultaneous* with the attempt to reduce all phenomena to the merely biological and with the devaluation of all values. This single fact should be shattering enough to prevent anyone, especially a Jew, from making science the criterion of opinion or action. If God, as Rabbi Kohn asserts, and as I agree, "reveals Himself in all the events of life," He has spoken to us in this age with primordial unmistakableness. In all humility I do not see how the great Word can be misinterpreted. Man has abandoned Him and His Law and His holiness. He who would see the result need merely look about him.

LUDWIG LEWISOHN

In Rabbi Kohn's article, "The Quest for Religious Truth" (Oct. 4, Vol. XII. No. 11) he says: "To assume, as some profess, that Jews possess an inherent racial genius for religion is without scientific warrant since religion is not hereditable characteristic. That assumption is also ethically dangerous since it violates the fundamental principle of human equality."

I cannot possibly agree with this opinion. What does he mean by "scientific warrant"? Science operates through experience and common sense, which clearly tells us that such a thing as genius, talent, or disposition does exist. A comparison between literature, music or philosophy of, let us say, the French, the English, the Russians, the Scandinavians clearly brings this to light.

As far as the special religious genius of the Jews is concerned, let me quote from "The History of the Christ," by the pragmatist Giovanni Pappini, out of the chapter, "The Prophets":

"India had its ascetics hiding in the forest in order to conquer the body and to drown the Spirit in the Infinite. China had its sages who taught civic morality to countrymen and emperors; Greece, its philosophers who fabricated harmonious systems or dialectic subtleties. Rome produced law-givers who engraved on tables of bronze, laws of the highest justice to which those who command and possess can attain. The Middle Ages brought forth preachers who tried to wake up dormant Christianity through the remembrance of the story of the Passion and the terror of Hell. The Jewish people had their Prophets."

Religion as such might not be a heritable characteristic; its conception and the way of giving utterance to it, however, differ with every nation. Nor, finally, can I agree that there is any ethical danger in believing in one's genius unless one takes an unfair advantage of it against others, which, with true religion, should be impossible.

A. GRELINGER

REPLY

Although Dr. Lewisohn apparently takes offense at being classified as a romanticist and mystic, no offense was intended in so classifying him. Romantic mystics have made important contributions to human civilization which are entitled to recogniton. But their method of thought is frequently a detriment to the quest for religious truth, and Dr. Lewisohn's letter seems to me to corroborate this statement by the way it confuses the issue.

Dr. Lewisohn says that "no ethic without metaphysical validation has or ever had any compelling force." Suppose we admit the truth of this assertion; where does it get us? What is the nature of the validation which metaphysics gives? Can we accept *every* metaphysical doctrine? If not, how can we distinguish between different metaphysical systems, between Dr. Lewisohn's for example and the Roman Catholic metaphysics which so entranced Franz Werfel?

In my article, I did not deprecate metaphysical thinking. I sought to lay down criteria by which the relative truth of competing metaphysical notions might be tested. I identified these criteria as intuition, reason, and experience and tried to show how each of them can be applied. To which of these does Dr. Lewisohn take exception? Certainly not to intuition, the very basis of our belief in God, which long preceded the elaborate metaphysical systems of the philosophers. To reason, then? Hardly, for he pays tribute to the criterion of rational consistency when he tries to

prove that my own arguments are inconsistent. Does he then protest against the test of experience? He himself says that he is "unwilling to go beyond the historic process" to prove his point. But how does the historic process prove anything except by the test of experience?

Dr. Lewisohn, therefore, has not refuted anything of what I had to say with regard to the criteria for judging religious truth. He accepts the criteria, apparently, but rejects some of the conclusions I derive from them. He differs most vehemently with me on the doctrine of Israel as the chosen people.

He contends that "it is no more inaccurate to say that the Jews have an inherent" (he does not say "racial") "genius for religion than that the ancient Greeks possessed an inherent national genius for the arts in space." Granted—but does the artistic excellence of the *ancient* Greeks prove that the *modern* Greeks are a chosen people, chosen to give art to the world, that no other people can ever be the leading artistic influence? I do not deny the genius for religion revealed in the civilization of the *ancient* Jews. I merely deny that this proves that the Jews are God's chosen people in the sense that they must, by cosmic law, be preeminent in religion in every age until the millenium.

Dr. Lewisohn is quite correct when he blames the catastrophic events of modern times on a violation of the essential truths taught by Jewish religion. They could also be shown to violate the essential truths taught by other religions. Where Dr. Lewisohn is wrong and romantically mystifying is in his assuming that, in the conflict between good and evil in modern life, the Jewish people are on one side and on the other is the whole array of "the dictatorships of right and left" and the adherents of that "superstition of science" which is responsible, according to him, for the devaluation of all values.

That is not a true picture. If Dr. Lewisohn wants to prove his case "entirely within the historic process," how can be ignore the part that Jews have played in the development of both capitalism and communism and of science and "the superstition of science?" To be sure, the dictatorships of the right finally ejected Jews from the structure of that national capitalism the Jews helped to build, but in establishing the alliance between capitalism and expansionist nationalism as well as in establishing that between communism and expansionist nationalism, Jews have played a part, though not the dominant part ascribed to them by their enemies. Moreover, it is wrong to ignore the part played by Christians and even by Gentile skeptics and iconoclasts in fighting all forms of oppression and rendering devoted and self-sacrificing service to the cause of a more humane civilization.

Dr. Lewisohn sins against the cause of religious truth when he joins authoritarian religionists in their hue and cry against science as the cosmic villain in the modern tragedy and in their hailing of metaphysics as the hero that will save mankind. It is not men like Newton, Darwin, Einstein, or Ehrlich, who have disintegrated our social order. One might make out a much stronger case against the Hegels, Fichtes, Nietzches, and Spenglers, who helped provide the metaphysical rationale for statism, racism and totalitarian nationalism. But that too would be an oversimplification, for it ignores the dominant role played by greed for gain and lust for power, of which no people has a monopoly and with which all peoples are tainted.

Is the Jewish religion superior to all other religions in the modern world? Even if it be superior, to insist on its superiority in no wise enhances its value. The truths of our religion are not one whit truer or less true, if other peoples are in possessiion of the truth in equal or superior measure. The demand of Jewish religion on our loyalty does not rest on its relative value, when compared with the other religions, but on its immediate value to us, since it is the embodiment of all the truth that we recognize as contributing to our self-fulfilment as Jews and as human beings. In the debacle of modern society, humility and not boastfulness is the appropriate religious mood. Instead of affirming pretensions to religious preeminence by divine right, let us confess our own implication in the sins of our age, and let us ungrudingly cooperate with other peoples and faiths, in a common quest for religious truth. Let us acknowledge that the truths of our own religion are neither exhaustive nor monopolistically ours. Any other group is welcome to appropriate them without repudiating the symbols and sancta of their own religion. And we shall feel free to appropriate religious truth wherever we find it and associate that truth as we have repeatedly done in the past, with the symbols and sancta of Jewish religion.

As for Mr. Grelinger's argument, there is only this to say: The fact that the French, English, Russian and Scandinavian cultures differ from one another does not prove that their differences are hereditable racial qualities. They may very well be the result of unique experiences. We do not deny that Jewish religion differs from all others. We deny that the difference is a biological rather than a cultural one. It does not prove Israel to be the chosen of God, unless we mean by that doctrine that the Jews were chosen to be Jewish as the French were chosen to be French. Such an interpretation would, to be sure, rob the chosen people idea of all its opprobrium but also of all its significance.

EUGENE KOHN